

rather, the bonding of stone walls is best effected by that kind of arrangement, whilst, indeed, alternate courses of headers and stretchers in a stone wall would be both unsightly and absurd."

On another point, to which we have already referred, our author has the following remarks:—

"Under ordinary circumstances the half-brick thickness of brickwork which separates the inside of a common chimney-flue from the inside of a building, does not become heated to such a degree as to justify the slightest alarm for the safety of timber in contact with the outside of the brickwork; but it is an difficult in practice to secure the complete filling-in with mortar of the various parts of brickwork, that prudence dictates the propriety of requiring the surfaces of the work, both inside and outside any chimney-flue within a building, to be plastered over, to stop imperfect joints, and so to prevent the lodgment of soot, which a spark passing up the flue will enkindle, and which, being enkindled, will endanger the safety of the building through a joint, a dooring-board, or a wooden skirting, which may shut upon, or lie against, the unstopped joint towards the inside of the building. Not only, indeed, are the joints of the brickwork often left unstopped with mortar, but wooden plugs are driven into them, and often quite through into the chimney-flues, to afford the means of fixing the wooden skirtings; and these are perhaps the most frequent means of communicating fire from the flue to the skirtings, and so to the inside of the building."

On Saturday, the 9th October, 1817 (the newspapers relate), Broughton Old Hall, near Manchester, was partly destroyed by fire, and damage was done to the extent of nearly 1,000*l*. The fire was entirely subdued in less than two hours, after destroying a large portion of the roof and of the cupola over the south front, besides the upper part of the grand staircase. As the walls and ceilings were in course of receiving embellishments, they also suffered much injury both from fire and water. The disaster is attributed to the joiners on the previous night having left a very hot fire in one of the rooms, which had ignited some plugs, the ends of which, in one direction, communicated with the flues, and, in the other, with the skirting-boards of the room."

More attention to the materials and workmanship of structures in the metropolis, on the part of the district-surveyors, might usefully be called for.

A word as to the progress of the measures for obtaining an amendment of the Buildings Act.

The committee appointed by Lord Morpeth to consider the subject have held several meetings to take evidence, and are now about to report. The constitution of the offices of the Official Referees and Registrar has been the subject of some animadversion, and suggestions have been made for remodelling the same entirely, with a view to render the administration of the law more speedy and economical to the public. The subject of "special supervision" has also been considered, and, indeed, if we are rightly informed, most of the principal objections to the form and working of the Act have received attention.

We are satisfied that any attempt to improve the present Act, by another supplemental Act, will prove a failure; and we earnestly hope that the committee will not fail to recommend Lord Morpeth to bring in an entirely new Bill in preference to making such an endeavour.

CHESTER CATHEDRAL.—At a meeting of the Archaeological Institute on the 3rd inst., Mr. R. Hume communicated a plan of remains of the Norman choir of Chester Cathedral, brought to light during recent restorations. Mr. H. remarked, that the usual proportions of the earlier Norman structures had there been observed; and that the eastern apse was semi-circular. The plan also illustrated the form of the present cathedral of Chester, as first built, but subsequently modified.

THE PRESENT STATE OF TASTE IN GOTHIC ARCHITECTURE, AND INKLINGS OF THE FUTURE.

ARCHITECTURE IN MANCHESTER.

In a former notice of the town of Manchester, we mentioned the evidence here afforded, of greatly improved taste in architecture. Notwithstanding that there may be sufficient reason, in the present state of the art, for the charges sometimes made against its professors, it is pleasant to have it in our power to record a step forward in their capacity for artistic perception, betokening, as it does likewise, the growth of a new desire for the graces of art, on the part of the public. Architects, indeed, are much what the world makes them, though they are not on that account absolved from all care for public taste, of which they do not sufficiently feel that they are the proper guardians.

In ecclesiastical architecture, much the same change in taste is apparent, as at other places. The church at Hulme, by Goodwin, and that at Cheetham Hill, by T. W. Atkinson, were once greatly admired, and in many respects deservedly so; but they have not the orthodox length of chancel, they may possibly be a little out in some details, and they cannot be mistaken for old churches, therefore their architects, who designed when Gothic architects were few and of questionable ability, would now be sneered at as incompetent.—Individual labour in an extensive and intricate study, like that where examples of buildings and details form the matter of research, can do comparatively little, and by no other means than that assiduous and combined labour, with systematic arrangement, with which the pursuit of the study has been of late years carried on, could the present accurate knowledge of the style have been gained. In the circumstance of such a position, the architects of the present day have the advantage of their predecessors; but in proportion to those advantages, have they availed themselves of such a position? have they become better artists? The answer should not be doubtful.—Between many such churches as the two above mentioned, and some later works,

"—that, shunning faults, one quiet tenor keep."

the calm judgment of posterity may find the difference in that which should be the chief ingredient in design, namely, ART. If something more than learning in mere schools and dates, or than skill in manipulation, is requisite to form a painter or a sculptor, architecture must be included under the same category.

Of the change of character in church architecture, thus referred to, the new Catholic church in Chapel-street, already noticed in this journal, is a remarkable instance, displaying knowledge of the examples at Howden and Selby, from which it has been adapted, and great beauty of detail. It is a cross church, with centre tower, surmounted by a lofty spire which has the appearance of too great breadth at the base. The apex is terminated by a ball of copper gilt, and a cross, also of copper, with a weathercock. A turret stair on the north side, has a spire, similarly surmounted, and which is covered with slate. The walls are entirely of stone, in regular courses, hammer-dressed, and are to be plastered internally. The length of the church can hardly be less than 180 feet, having four bays, or arches, in the length of the nave, and a like number in the choir. Other dimensions, according to our measurements, were:—

Centre to centre of columns in the length of the nave, 18 feet 6 inches.

Thickness of each column in the nave, 3 feet.

Thickness of each column supporting the spire, 7 feet.

Thickness of walls of aisles, 3 feet.

In the nave there is a plain collar-beam roof, but, in the choir, springers are left for a future groining. In the nave clerestory, there is a passage in the thickness of the wall. Figures of angels will be carved in the spandril spaces in the choir. The capitals have rich foliage, but the carving is not so successful as might have been desired. The west front, adapted from that at Howden, has richly crocketed pinnacles, each having the figure of an angel as a finial. The east window, of flowing tracery, copied from the example at Selby, may be considered an instance of the misuse

of old examples. Had the architects consulted the whole of Mr. Sharp's illustrations of decorated windows, instead of procuring merely one plate from his "Parallels," they might, we think, have produced something strikingly novel, and even more in accordance with the spirit of the style adopted, than is that particular example itself. The Selby window is in some parts ungraceful, and even at variance with the principle of decorated tracery. In an original work, trifling mistakes may be excused, but it reflects no credit upon an architect to copy them. Modern practice, however, teaches different, and the greatest possible use is made of old examples, whilst the least possible benefit to art results from them. By learning from examples, mistakes may be avoided; by copying them, their faults become more glaring in the transcript, than they were in the original.

From this church we passed to a smaller edifice, close by, erecting for the Free Kirk, and which we think sufficiently important to merit particular description. Messrs. Travis and Muggall are the architects. The style upon which the design is based, is Gothic and perpendicular; but galleries being required, the architects, in place of separating the nave and aisles by the ordinary stone piers and arches, have substituted ornamental iron columns—bracketed out to support the galleries—carrying timber arches, above which is a range of wooden dormers in what may be called a low clerestory, also of wood. From the same level in the transverse section, spring the arches of the open-timbered roof, so that the interior, with great novelty of design, has a picturesque effect. Externally, the church has at the west, a central gable, a smaller gable to the side roof, and a tower and spire at the north-west angle. The ridge of the side roof continues for but a short distance from the gable (we think about 10 feet), and thence, as a "lean" to the "clerestory," containing the dormers already mentioned, continuing the line of the apex. The window tracery in the church might, perhaps, have been improved, the angles of the spire a little more pronounced, and the labels to one or two arches, better; but the details, generally, display great care and taste, and amongst such portions are the crockets to the label of the west window, the iron railing, the woodwork generally, and many other parts, and in the schools and attached buildings.

The principal novelty has been the subject of much condemnation. For ourselves, we notice the church, because it shows more of real design than hundreds of the structures lately erected throughout the kingdom, on what are called correct principles, and if not altogether what might be wished, by no means justifies much of what has been said about it. It is at least that which its more elaborate neighbour is not, a foretaste of what we hope the architecture of England may become, an evidence not only of skill in drawing and arrangement, but of original thought. Indeed, difficult as we confess it is, to lay down correct principles for criticism, in reference to the future practice of ecclesiastical architecture, we are, as we have said, far from satisfied with the present state of this branch of the art. Formerly we had a version of Gothic architecture, in which were distorted outlines, and other deformities, which a slight acquaintance with the architecture of the middle ages would have taught us to avoid; but whilst we have gained by the recent improvement in architectural knowledge, we have gained little of what ought to have resulted from the increased store of our materials. For ourselves, we do not always necessarily think that church the best piece of architecture, in which there is no detail that can be found fault with, nor do we think that every church built in the present century, except during the last ten years, must necessarily be not worthy of examination. But such has become the opinion of the day, appears in every newspaper article in which a church is the subject of criticism, and infects the profession of architecture itself: it is an opinion which we lose no opportunity of eradicating, fatal as it is to the high standing of the pursuit amongst kindred arts and fields of thought, and discreditable to all who are engaged in the practice of architecture. In the discussion respecting the particular work which has called forth these remarks, we were as little pleased with the tone of defence as with that of attack; the same feeling, that of absolute